

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 AGR-05 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 FEAE-00 FPC-01 H-02

INR-07 INT-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-03 SAM-01

OES-03 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 FRB-03 SIL-01 LAB-04

PRS-01 PA-01 USIA-06 IO-10 EUR-12 /120 W

----- 026762

R 232037Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7651

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PORT OF SPAIN 0910

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB PINT TD

SUBJECT: SUGAR STRIKE ENDS, OIL STRIKE CONTINUES

REF: POS 849

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. THE STRIKE BY THE ALL TRINIDAD SUGAR WORKERS UNION
AND THE NO-CUT CAMPAIGN OF THE ISLANDWIDE CANE FARMERS
TRADE UNION (ICFTU), WHICH STOPPED ALL WORK ON THE 1975 SUGAR
CROP FOR SIX WEEKS, HAVE ENDED WITH NO SIGNIFICANT
GAINS BY EITHER GROUP. THE SUGAR WORKERS RETURNED TO
WORK ON APRIL 21 AND THE ICFTU VOTED TO BEGIN CUTTING CANE
ON APRIL 22. RESOLUTION OF THE DISPUTES BETWEEN ALL
TRINIDAD AND CARONI, LTD. WAS LEFT TO THE INDUSTRIAL
COURT WHILE THE CANE FARMERS HAVE GIVEN UP, FOR THE TIME
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BEING, ON THEIR MAIN OBJECTIVE, RECOGNITION OF THE ICFTU

AS THE BARGAINING AGENT FOR CANE FARMERS. THE RETURN TO WORK BY THE SUGAR WORKERS WAS THE FIRST BREAK IN THE UNITED LABOUR FRONT WHOSE MEMBERS HAD PLEDGED TO HOLD OUT UNTIL THE DEMANDS OF THE THREE PRINCIPAL MEMBERS - THE OILFIELD WORKERS TRADE UNION (OWTU), ALL TRINIDAD, AND THE ICFTU - WERE MET.

2. THE SUGAR STRIKE WAS BROKEN BY A COMBINATION OF THE ECONOMIC PRESSURE OF NO PAY FOR SIX WEEKS, THE USE OF DEFENSE FORCE PERSONNEL TO BAG AND DELIVER SUGAR, AND THE REQUIREMENT FROM THE INDUSTRIAL COURT THAT WORK RESUME BEFORE IT BEGAN HEARING THE CASE. IT HAS PROVED VERY COSTLY BOTH TO THE WORKERS AND THE COMPANIES INVOLVED ALTHOUGH THE ACTUAL COST WILL DEPEND ON HOW MUCH OF THE REMAINING CROP IS HARVESTED BEFORE THE ADVENT OF THE RAINY SEASON MAKES FIELD WORK IMPOSSIBLE. INDUSTRY SOURCES ARE NOW PREDICTING A TOTAL PRODUCTION FIGURE OF BETWEEN 110 AND 140,000 TONS IF NO FURTHER WORK STOPPAGES OCCUR AND IF THE RAINY SEASON BEGINS IN JUNE. AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR, THE THREE COMPANIES HAD ESTIMATED THAT THEY WOULD PRODUCE IN EXCESS OF 220,000 TONS.

3. TEXACO AND THE OWTU REACHED THE END OF THEIR SECOND TEN-DAY NEGOTIATING PERIOD UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE INDUSTRIAL COURT WITHOUT REACHING AGREEMENT ON THE SIZE OF THE WAGE INCREASE DESPITE SEVERAL LATE-NIGHT NEGOTIATING SESSIONS. ALTHOUGH THE UNION HAS INCHED DOWN TO 82 PER CENT, TEXACO HAS REMAINED FIRM AT 40 PER CENT UNTIL THE UNION MAKES A REALISTIC OFFER, I.E. BELOW THEIR INITIAL 80 PERCENT DEMAND. UNLESS BOTH PARTIES REQUEST A FURTHER EXTENSION OF TIME TO SETTLE OUT OF COURT, THE DISPUTE WILL BE SUBJECTED TO THE LENGTHY PRECEDURES OF THE INDUSTRIAL COURT. WITH MORE AND MORE OF THE TEXACO STAFF EMPLOYEES RETURNING TO WORK AND THE OWTU MEMBERSHIP GROWING INCREASINGLY RESTIVE, PRESIDENT GENERAL GEORGE WEEKES AND THE UNION LEADERSHIP ARE FEELING INCREASING PRESSURE TO END THE STRIKE.

END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. COMMENT: WITH THE BREAK IN THE SUGAR STRIKE AND THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EROSION OF OIL WORKER SUPPORT FOR THE STRIKE AGAINST TEXACO, THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY OF HOLDING FIRM AGAINST ALMOST ALL OF THE DEMANDS OF THE ULF WHILE INSURING THE SUPPLY OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS AND SUGAR TO THE PUBLIC APPEARS TO BE WORKING, AT LEAST IN THE SHORT RUN. IT NOW SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT THE SOLIDARITY BETWEEN SUGAR AND OIL WORKERS OF THE GLORY DAYS OF THE ULF WILL BE SUSTAINED OVER THE LONG TERM OR THAT IT WILL HAVE ANY LONG-TERM EFFECT ON THE POLITICAL

SITUATION IN TRINIDAD.

MILLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SUGAR, PETROLEUM, LABOR UNIONS, LABOR STRIKES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PORTO00910
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750144-0204
From: PORT OF SPAIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750424/aaaaawqz.tel
Line Count: 117
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 POS 849
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 SEP 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <18 DEC 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SUGAR STRIKE ENDS, OIL STRIKE CONTINUES
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, TD, ICFTU, SUGAR WORKERS UNION
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006